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18 November 1980

Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 41/80)



FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

ARABS WARNED NOT TO EXPECT AL-SADAT TO REJOIN THEM

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 22-28 Aug 80 pp 22-23

[Article: "Three Threats to Al-Sadat, Should He Think of Returning to Arab Resistance Front: Refusal To Withdraw From Sinai; Cutting Off American Aid; Stopping Rearmament of Egyptian Army"]

[Text] The Arabs are mistaken if they think that Al-Sadat could return to their ranks, even if he wanted to. The United States and Israel have been able to tie him up so tight that he was barely able to oppose Israel's decision to Judaize Jerusalem and make it Israel's capital with a "temporary freezing" of the autonomy talks until the next American president comes to his help.

Can the Middle East stay as is until the American elections are held in November, without a great explosion taking place as a result of the atmosphere of increased Israeli-Arab tension, aggravated inter-Arab differences, and clear failure of the Camp David process?

All moves and developments inspire pessimism. Both moderate and radical Arab factions have become convinced that there is no hope for a political initiative for a just solution of the Middle East crisis, so long as Israel can pursue a policy serving its selfish interests and expansionist ambitions without fear of any punishment or rebuke.

President Al-Sadat, who plunged headlong into his own predicament by following the American Camp David initiative, finds himself in a desperate position. He was forced to turn down a new American proposal to resume the autonomy talks with Israel, because there was no use continuing them after Israel's decision to annex Jerusalem and increase Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

Instead, he proposed to Israel and the United States the convening of a third summit meeting to "resuscitate" whatever is left of the Camp David spirit. He did so after he saw the Israelis push him into a tight corner in front of the Arab world. They let him know through their actions that they would not give him any more than he obtained in the accord, namely recovery of the Sinai in return for Egyptian recognition of Israel, the exchange of diplomatic relations and normalization. Thus, the Israelis ruled out progress toward a comprehensive settlement based on evacuating all occupied Arab territory and granting the Palestinians even limited self-rule.

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Nevertheless, following long meditation in the Sinai, Al-Sadat did not develop the courage to admit his failure and return to the Arab-fold--as Crown Prince Fahd has invited him to do. Al-Sadat preferred to level charges against the Arabs themselves. He picked the Arab point of weakness, namely internal discord and conflict, to hold them responsible for Israel's annexation of Jerusalem.

Where Will Al-Sadat Stop?

As a matter of fact, Al-Sadat is now completely convinced that resumption of talks with Israel would be of no use. However, he will not risk taking a "historic" initiative or decision, because there are a number of factors and restrictions which prevent him from doing so. Therefore, the Arabs must give up completely any hope of Al-Sadat rejoining them. These factors and restrictions include:

1. Al-Sadat fears that if he should break off with Israel, his relations with the United States would turn sour. Carter would not forgive him if he took such a step at a time when Carter is in great difficulty in his own presidential reelection bid. Carter could punish Al-Sadat immediately by suspending American aid and economic grants, which now amount to \$1 billion annually (the Arabs used to give Al-Sadat more than \$2 annually).
2. The Egyptian armed forces are now in the midst of exchanging Eastern [Soviet] arms and methods for Western arms and methods. It would be difficult to secure the continued flow of American arms if Al-Sadat decides to abandon Camp David. It would also be difficult to secure the resumption of the influx of Eastern arms or revival of good relations between Cairo and Moscow, considering their current deteriorated and strained condition.
3. Should he abandon Camp David Al-Sadat would in all probability face Israeli retaliation in the form of a refusal to pull out of the last third of the Sinai (from a strategic point of view, it is the most important part), which is supposed to be returned to Egypt in 1982.

Shackled by these three fears, Al-Sadat finds himself like a prisoner who has no choice but to accept the fait accompli, keep quiet, and content himself with freezing the autonomy talks which have not made any meaningful progress in the entire 18 months since they started.

The truth is that the Israelis were not content with driving Al-Sadat into a corner in front of his people, the Arabs in general, and the world at large. They actually threatened to suspend the evacuation of Sinai, if he should undertake any dramatic change in his policy, or if he should slow down the normalization process.

Al-Sadat found himself forced to confirm his invitation to Yitzhak Navon, the Israeli president, to visit Egypt and even give a speech to the Egyptian People's Assembly.

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All of Al-Sadat's hopes are now pinned on Carter's reelection (an uncertain prospect) and the fall of the Begin government. Israeli elections are to take place early next spring instead of in the autumn of 1981. The return of the Mapai party to power could result in some concessions to Al-Sadat toward solving the Palestinian issue. But this again is an uncertain prospect, because even though the position of Mapai differs tactically from Begin's, it is nevertheless still very far from Al-Sadat's position, let alone the position of the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular.

The Israeli position is made clear today by the decision to Judaize Jerusalem and make it Israel's capital; by the increasing Jewish settlements on the West Bank; and by Israel's refusal to recognize the rights of the Palestinians or negotiate with their legitimate representative, the PLO.

Israel persists in its obstinacy. In the absence of a genuine worldwide [moral] reaction or of deterrent military Arab strength, Israel is prepared to maintain its policy. Israel does not even pay attention to world opinion. This is demonstrated by its commitment of foolish actions, in spite of its complete isolation, such as by launching commando raids against Palestinian positions in Lebanon, regardless of the impact of these raids on the interests of its ally, the United States, and the West in general.

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INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

BRIEFS

ISRAELI JERUSALEM DECISION CONDEMNED--Israel's decision to Judaize Jerusalem and make it Israel's eternal capital has offended the feelings and emotions of the Arabs and Muslims to whom this city is a particularly holy shrine. They secured, through the United Nations, an international resolution condemning Israel, and they adopted a Saudi-Iraqi resolution to impose a political and economic boycott on any country that recognizes and honors the Israeli decision. It is expected that before the end of this month, they will secure another international resolution that will call upon nations concerned to remove their embassies from Jerusalem. The foreign ministers of the Islamic nations will meet in September in Morocco to consider firm Islamic measures for the ultimate goal of preserving the Arab character and Islamic holy places of Jerusalem.
[Text] [Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 22-28 Aug 80 p 22]

ALGERIA, MAURITANIA ON SAHARA--According to leaks from the delegation which accompanied the Mauritanian head of state in his official visit to Algeria (28 September-1 October), President Chadli Bendjedid made some proposals to Lieutenant Colonel Khouna Ould Haydala concerning the Sahara conflict. "The POLISARIO is going to have much more difficulty attacking Morocco from its traditional Algerian bases around Tindouf since Morocco is busy sealing off that region. Mauritania must therefore give more help to the POLISARIO by offering it safe havens, while Algeria would give Nouakchott the means to ensure air cover should Morocco exercise the right of pursuit into Mauritanian territory...." As soon as he returned home President Haydala apparently informed the members of the military committee for national salvation. The proposal was certainly not unanimously welcomed and some officers advocated that Mauritania reaffirm its neutrality in the Sahara conflict. President Haydala, anxious to reassure them, apparently also told them that Algeria is prepared to supply Mauritania with... "several dozen aircraft" for its protection.

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AFGHANISTAN

JAPANESE RESEARCHER REPORTS AS EYEWITNESS

Tokyo BUSINESS JAPAN in English Oct 80 pp 31, 33, 35, 36

[Article by Osamu Ishida, Staff Reporter, Sankei Shimbun]

[Text]

THE Soviet troops equipped with modern weapons that invaded Afghanistan last December are now finding themselves mired down as they face the unmitigating Afghan resistance. Recently I met Eiji Tajima, a 29-year old Japanese student from Tokyo doing research on Tibet in India, who recently returned from Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, to New Delhi. He was the first Japanese to cross the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan and later the Afghan-Iranian border to closely observe the Afghanistan situation after the Soviet invasion. Tajima told me about conditions in local cities in Afghanistan. He also saw Soviet bombers raiding the guerrillas.

Tajima has visited Afghanistan four times. With a total stay of six months, he could easily note changes wrought upon towns and villages after the Soviet invasion. He went there from curiosity, wishing to closely observe this over-running of Afghanistan, and sharing the tense situation on the battlefields. The following is his report.

Though I had asked the Afghan consulate in Peshawar for a visa, it took many days to get it. The consul first insisted that it was impossible for any tourist to visit his country during the emergency, but I continued my persuasion by saying, "I wish to see Afghanistan and buy embroidered folk shirts." I finally succeeded in obtaining a visa good for a month.

I took a bus from Peshawar to Kabul. The bus had about 40 passengers — Afghans and Pakistanis. I was the only foreigner. Nothing happened on the trip up to the Khyber Pass. Though strict, the immigration officer on the border let me in. Getting close to Jalalabad, I could see many Soviet tanks. Both MiG fighters and helicopters were circling in the sky. It took me four hours to reach Jalalabad from Peshawar. There were many trucks carrying Soviet troops.

Destroyed or burned vehicles and discarded empty cartridge cases were scattered along the roads. Many holes on the fields gave evidence of bombings. The roads out of town were blocked and I found a cheap lodging house to stay overnight. Citizens with hardened faces were watching the tanks and saying nothing. Power failures took place

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very often perhaps due to the shortage of power or broken wires. I couldn't sleep well because of the constant sounds of rifle firing in the suburbs.

At nine a.m. next morning, I left for Kabul. For fear of being attacked by the guerrillas, our bus joined a caravan which consisted of a tank at the head, followed by trucks, buses and passenger cars. A second tank assumed the central position and another guarded the rear. Altogether 50 vehicles were destined for Kabul. To accommodate ourselves to the speed of the tanks, the caravan was slow in moving, 30 to 40 kilometers per hour. On the way to the capital, the fleet was checked many times by soldiers. Both baggage and our passports were examined. When we saw the capital, the tension relaxed somewhat.

I found lodging on the second floor of a steakhouse on Chicken Street, a new area in Kabul, for 30 Afghanis, equivalent to \$150. Most of the restaurants in the city were closed. My only choice was an eating house near the steakhouse where many soldiers came to eat. Nobody addressed himself to me. Everywhere in the capital I saw Soviet tanks. Most of the Soviet soldiers were Caucasians and I did not see any Central Asian Soviet soldiers.

The majority of the soldiers were very young, 15 to 20 years old, and they seemed frightened with rifles in their hands. Some of them reminded me of tortoises as they showed only their heads from their tanks. When taking photos of the tanks, I was stopped by angry Soviet soldiers and pushed around on two occasions. The first time, the film was pulled out of my camera and taken away. One of the soldiers visited me at the lodging place later and told me, "If you offer me a pair of jeans and 2,000 Afghanis (some \$10,000), I'll return the film."

He was a 17 or 18 year-old boy from Minsk. When I replied by saying, "I can offer you jeans and a watch," he said, "I'll come again," but he never came back. According to the people in the town, Russian soldiers are stationed in Kabul by turns for several months, and when they return to Russia, they spend all their money buying souvenirs. The money the young soldier suggested to me would probably have been spent for this purpose.

I saw many Russian soldiers shopping for souvenirs in the towns. They seemed desperate to buy things. They would come to a store by jeep. One of them would stay in the jeep while the others split into two groups. One group would enter the store while the other group stay outside with rifles in their hands, ready for a surprise attack. Their faces looked irritated and red; the others were serious as they studied the goods for sale.

Afghans kept silent in the streets of Kabul and local policemen didn't pay attention to foreign travelers. But once I entered a bazaar or a store, they would offer me a cup of tea and frankly express to me their pent-up grievances against the Russians. Most of their complaints were centered around the Soviet Union and the current regime led by President Babrak Karmal. In many places in the city, people told me, "We will never be defeated," "Mushahidin, (freedom fighters) have killed hundreds of Soviet soldiers," and "We are not afraid of MiGs or Soviet tanks."

In the old parts of the city, I could see women with their faces covered with traditional chador, but in the new areas many young women were dressed in western clothes.

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Information ran quickly through the streets. It surprised me when I heard that most of the people working at stores in the city knew that I was in Kabul. Often, as I talked with people in stores, a freedom fighter, or guerrilla, would rush into the store and hurriedly inform the sales people of something. Secret documents, which are called "night letters," are not letters at all but such oral communication, I thought.

There were many strange people in Kabul. Two Americans, who called themselves Communists, were always looking out from the roof of the hotel. There were also many foreigners, who did not look like travelers, here and there in the city, always looking for some information. I was also taken as a Japanese police agent and had to change my lodging house. It was a time when rumors of the Soviets' use of poison gas was still prevailing (See note). On notice boards everywhere in the old town, there were photos of poison gas cans with a caption, "Made in USA." This must have been the Soviet way of shifting the blame.

I personally met a Mujahidin. He was red with anger and said that the Soviet troops were indiscriminately killing Afghans with rotating bombs.

After having stayed in Kabul for nine days, I left for Mazar-i-Sharif, a city close to the Soviet border. Though I intended to go by bus, no bus was available, and I had to fly on a domestic airline plane. As a foreigner, I had to pay twice the ordinary fare. In the city, there were many Soviet soldiers, particularly higher-ranking soldiers. There were many Soviets lodging in the hotel where I stayed. They seemed to have mistaken me as being of the Hazra tribe of Afghanistan and watched me with blood-shot eyes. Nobody smiled. In one of the rooms in the hotel, there was an accumulation of weapons captured from the guerrillas. I could see some 20 pistols with Chinese inscriptions and a star. They must have been produced in China.

I was invited to the house of a local high-ranking officer with whom I got acquainted when I was watching a traditional Afghan sports event. He is more than 50 years old. He bitterly complained by saying, "The Russian soldiers are despotic. Women who have come to Afghanistan with these soldiers are just as bad."

"How many Russians are in Afghanistan?" I asked. "There are about 5,000 Russians including their families," he replied. In Kabul, it is said, they have built apartment houses in the suburbs and are living with their families. They seem to be determined to stay in Afghanistan for a long period.

After having spent a night in Mazar-i-Sharif, I flew to Maiana, a small town with a population of some 3,000. No Russian was in the town, nor were there any Soviet helicopters at the airport. This was the only town where I didn't see any Russians during my entire trip.

I took a truck with 20 other passengers from Maiana to the city of Herat, located in Western Afghanistan. The road was a "natural road" made of hardened desert sand. After having run for an hour, the bus suddenly stopped. Then it turned around and went back to Maiana. Once again I took a plane.

At the Herat airport, I met two Caucasian doctors. They seemed to be surprised to see me saying, "You are the first foreigner we have met in the past four months." Then they advised me by saying, "There was a riot in the old town yesterday. You shouldn't go there. It is dangerous."

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The city has a population of about 100,000. My impression was that they were more anti-Soviet than in Kabul. Soldiers on government army trucks were holding rifles at the ready, patrolling the town. Also, at the fortress built by Alexander the Great in the old town, the government army was maintaining its position. Soviet soldiers maintained their positions on the outskirts of the city and none of them could be seen in the town. People said, "If they came into the town, we'll kill them." When walking through the bazaar, someone called out to me, "Where are you from?" I replied, "I'm from Japan." He was so pleased that he took me into his house for tea. I stayed in Herat for two days and then took a bus for Kandahar where I planned to buy embroidered shirts. Five passengers were on the bus, each paying a fare of 200 Afghanis (some ¥1,000). As I had heard that the largest base of the Soviet Army was on the way, I wanted to see it.

The caravan this time consisted of a taxi and two trucks going before and after the bus, without convoy. We drove along for about two hours and passed a village called Adlaskan. Then suddenly about 10 freedom fighters appeared on the road and stopped us. They were turbaned, holding rifles, with gun belts on their waist. They demanded money. Every passenger gave them five or 10 Afghanis, and I offered 10. Their attitude was tough and everyone had to make a contribution.

When we were about to leave, we were surprised by two MiGs and two tanks.

It seemed as if they had been waiting for our arrival. The guerrillas disappeared quickly and from behind a sandhill they launched a counterattack. The fight continued for about 15 minutes. We were afraid, and fled. Giving up the trip to Kandahar, we went back to Herat. That was the day I felt the deepest fear during my stay in Afghanistan. That no convoy was attached to our caravan was apparently intended to lure out the guerrillas.

I returned to Herat where I stayed for two days. I went to the Herat Theater which was the only theater in Afghanistan where one can see women entertainers. But the theater was closed and there was nothing to indicate its past splendor. Though the city was controlled by the government army, it was said that many guerrillas were hiding there. In fact I heard the noise of rifle-shooting many times at night.

The manager of the hotel told me that it was dangerous to sleep in bed as I might be struck by a stray bullet, so I slept in a sleeping bag on the floor.

I took a mini-bus from there to Islam-kalar on the border. A customs officer welcomed me as I was the first Japanese he had seen in six months. He told me that his boss, who had been working with him as the only customs staff member, was killed when he was going back to Herat by bus at the beginning of March when the bus was attacked with rifles. All 45 passengers were killed. According to the official, they had been kept busy before the Russians came as many people passed the border, at a maximum 2,000 persons a day. He shrugged his shoulders saying, "What a sorry state we are in!" I felt reluctant to leave the country, but as I had achieved what I intended, I passed over the desert border and entered Iran.

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What impressed me most during my 16-day stay in Afghanistan was that both Afghan government army troops and Soviet troops were acting separately in their own way, and no concerted actions were being taken. While Russian soldiers were riding in new trucks, Afghan soldiers were using damaged ones. While the Russians were keeping their eyes upon foreigners, the government troops did not pay any attention to us.

Only the Soviet troops were fighting the guerrillas, and there was no contact between the government troops and the guerrillas, it was said. Such information was given to me by the shop owners in Kabul and Herat bazaars. For fear of betrayal by the Afghan troops, the Soviets did not provide them with helicopters or large weapons. The guerrillas do not intend to fight against the government troops but only against the Soviets. The Russian troops have supreme predominance over their Afghan counterparts in weaponry. But in individual fighting ability, the guerrillas are superior to the Russian soldiers who are apparently not highly trained.

Afghans look intrepid and fearless, but in fact are courteous and meek. Why should they suffer from such torments and pains, now that we have progressed almost to the 21st century! They have been enjoying a tranquil life in Hindu Kush. But their anti-Soviet and anti-Karmal sentiment has never waned. I felt strongly that they were united in supporting the guerrillas. One intellectual middle-aged man I met in Kabul emphasized that Afghanistan was different from Czechoslovakia. The shop owners in the bazaars also told me that they would never surrender to the Soviets. The fight of the non-compromising Afghans will continue. As an Asian, I sincerely hope that the Afghan people will be able to restore their own land based on the principle of self-determination.

Note:

The information that the invading Soviet troops were using poisonous gas against the Afghan guerrillas was repeated formally and informally by the U.S. State Department and other sources from the time immediately after the invasion started at the end of last year. Jack Anderson, a well-known columnist, has quoted information reportedly from U.S. intelligence sources that these gases were biological chemical ones strong enough to kill people 30 minutes after they have once been inhaled. □

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ALGERIA

SUBTLE BLEND OF ISLAM, REVOLUTION IN COUNTRY

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Sep 80 p 2279

[Article: "Algerian Chronicle: Implementation Attempt by Revolutionary Islam"]

[Text] Association of the concepts of Islam and of revolution has long been difficult for westerners to conceive, accustomed as they are to classic and often conservative stereotypes of Moslem doctrine and society. Perhaps it was the FLN in Algeria, tying together the idea of revolution and those of anticolonial war and liberation, that first gave a clear picture of a revolutionary overtone to the Muslim armed struggle.

In any event it was the Algerian National Charter of 1976 that, in recommending a transition from reformist Islam to revolutionary Islam introduced the latter among the ideological fundamentals of the Algerian state, and offers it today to world opinion as a political and social reality.

Under the aegis of President Boumediene a few large-scale economic and social measures were in fact undertaken, such as Land Reform and Socialist management of enterprises, with their implication of bold departure from classic interpretations of Islam, especially regarding property rights. Moreover the regime, without having recourse to official exegesis, allowed itself modern interpretations of the Islamic sources, taking the position for example that in contrast to Roman law, the Koran only gave sanctity to private property insofar as its use for the general welfare.

It is true that innovative measures were not promulgated in Algeria in all domains. Thus it is that in matters of personal statute and family law revolutionary Algeria is still holding off from taking a position. It has not yet, and probably never will adopt liberal solutions for the benefit of women; it appears very hesitant about following the example of Tunisia and Morocco, which have made provision by legislation or contract for the abolition or voluntary limitation of polygamy. Moslem opposition to change is especially vigorous and obstinate in Algeria; and subjected to the clandestine but persevering action of currents of Islamic fundamentalism, it is even discernible among the youth.

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Archaistic and Fundamentalist Reactions

Under the regime of President Chadli Bendjedid, the purpose of dealing with the totality of economic and social problems with an enhanced sense of realism surely involves the denial of no principle and upholds the formula consecrated by the Charter of Revolutionary Islam. But it would seem to imply more reservations regarding bold socioeconomic interpretations; in rural affairs, for instance, if the agrarian revolution continues, concern for encouraging the most profitable enterprises inspires a number of measures favorable to the "private sector," an area where Moslem practice is generally traditionalist, if not archaistic.

The "clean-up" operation begun in the fall of 1979, which continues in the form of a general revision of utilization and exploitation of the territory, as well as a restructuring of urban and rural housing, has often been interpreted as aiming towards restoration of morality; the authorities have had to put an end to attempts by over-zealous youth attacking couples living together, and they even aspired to exercise control over what went on in private homes.

In Algeria one is faced with a problem of modern Moslem training, all the more difficult to deal with in that it superimposes upon many other very urgent problems of training. As for Moslem matters, the first order of business would be to train the trainers.

In the meanwhile, the proliferation of mosques, and consequent multiplication of priests, even preachers, mostly of mediocre education, in a traditional way, persistent cults of marabouts [holy men, priests, shrines] especially in the countryside; a residual fraternal activity often mediocre in quality, bordering on charlatanism, all work together to keep popular Islam in Algeria in a partially archaic state.

An element of forward movement might, on the other hand, be represented by the young students doing Arabic studies. But their spotty education, their often narrow-minded outlook, their understandable anxiety in the face of the danger of underemployment, impose summary reactions upon them.

This same youth has indeed been observed taking sides vigorously and often violently at the time of the university incidents provoked by the Berberism crisis. One could discern there an admixture of integrist elements, whose thrust, far from tending towards progressivist action, were oriented towards reaction. However opposed it may wish to appear to fundamentalist religious currents, the Algerian government cannot deceive itself on the issue that the Arabization policy especially encourages the circles leaning in that direction.

A Doctrinal clarification

The semi-official information media are striving to bring things into focus. The press and radio broadcasting, which play an important role in shaping the attitudes of this vast public, vigorously oppose these attempts to subvert the national Islamic effort by integrists and worshippers of the past.

Bearing the title "Islam, Liberation and Progress," the 9 August issue of EL MOUDJAHID, reporting the ceremonies of the "Night of Destiny," recalls the

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watchword of the social revolution formulated by the Charter for Algerian Islam, militant Islam, enamored of justice, equality and knowledge; then clearly designating the integrists without naming them, it denounces "the nebulous messages of certain preachers [sic] in troubled waters who abuse the faith of the Algerians to drag them into an aberrant moralism, the falling back onto self," a teaching alien to the principles of Islam. These people would like to "restore anachronism in a world that escapes them, and in the name of purification and moral virtue rally under one banner the last survivors of our traditional feudal caste and big businessmen who hate socialism and progress." They pursue "assimilation by the goatee and the djellaba" [Moroccan smock], an allusion to the external appearance affected by the young fundamentalists.

The chronicler goes on to say that the important thing is to go much further and work "a total reform of society by decisive changes that put a definitive end to obscurantism, despotism, feudalism." To serve the agrarian revolution, Socialist management of enterprises and scientific research does not diminish faith in Islam: "it is a modern way, a just and non-demagogic way to serve Islam." Instruction aims "to deepen Islamic faith in a context of progress and justice." This faith must be protected against "seditious and charlatanist elements that try to undermine the common task of the revolution and Islam in Algeria, by exploiting the deficiencies and certain contradictions that have appeared in society."

In Algeria, Islam and revolution are therefore called upon to make "common cause." It is not a question here of a hollow formula: in many respects the goals of Islamic doctrine and the revolutionary thinking of Algeria are identical or very close. The struggle against maraboutism and deviant fraternal organization activity has very precise social and even medical justifications, and at the same time it suits the devotees of orthodox Islam by conforming to the need to uproot deviations based on superstition that are often leftovers of paganism. The revision of the relationships between capital and labor concern not only social justice, but equity prescribed by God. The fact still remains that however clear the principles, the concatenation of oppositions by integrists, worshippers of the past and reactionaries is often a stubborn reality.

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IRAN

OFFICIAL JAPANESE SOURCE GIVES EDGE TO IRAN

Tokyo NIHON KEIZAI SHIMBUN in Japanese 8 Oct 80 p 1

[Article: "Iran-Iraq War Will Last Long; Foreign Ministry Revises its View"]

[Text] A Foreign Ministry source on the 7th revealed a view on the Iran-Iraq war. He said that "A full-scale war will not last for a long time to come, because both of the two countries have only limited supplies of weapons and ammunition." At the same time, however, he revealed the following views: "There is little possibility of cessation of hostilities in the near future, and the present hostilities will continue, although their scale may be reduced." This means that the Foreign Ministry has revised, in practice, the view it held until recently, or the view that hostilities will not become protracted.

The same source also touched upon the war situation, and pointed out as follows: "At the start of the war, the Iraqi side was in a superior position. However, the war came to a stalemate around the 28th day of last month." He also said that the position of the Iranian forces has improved conspicuously recently, and that the Iraqi side is losing its overwhelmingly superior position. He pointed out that there is sufficient room for the Iranian side to launch counterattacks upon the enemy, because Iran has not yet brought into use all of its about 1,000 helicopters and the air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles left by the U.S. forces.

The Foreign Ministry source thinks that Iran is in an advantageous position, as far as air battles are concerned, partly for geographical reasons. He expects that fierce battles will develop hereafter for the domination of the air. He said that the battles in Khorramshahr inside Iranian territory will gain enough importance to determine the future of the war, and stressed the necessity of watching the battles in this district. According to this source, neither side has gained control of this district as yet.

As for the prospect for the restoration of peace, the same source again emphasized that "There is no alternative but to rely on the Islamic nations." He thinks, however, that there is little possibility of efforts at mediation producing visible effects at once. He also thinks that "The Arab nations harbor strong anxiety over the possibility of Iraq's becoming a leader of the Arab world by winning an overwhelming victory in the present war." [Full translation] [TN: Some other papers carried similar reports.]

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IRAN

ARAB ALIGNMENT IN GULF WAR ASSESSED

Tokyo MAINICHI DAILY NEWS in English 15 Oct 80 p 2

[Editorial: "Perilous Aspect of Mideast"]

[Text]

Under the circumstances, the fighting between Iraq and Iran is likely to be prolonged for lack of a powerful mediator. As neither side may win a decisive victory, the political map of the Middle East will undergo change.

A new split is occurring in the so-called Arab unity in connection with the Arab-Israel confrontation. It is now evident that the Iraq-Iran war cannot be analyzed without taking into consideration the question of Arabs vs. Israelis.

Since two major countries in the Gulf area are engaged in fighting, it is only natural that regional instability will be further escalated. We have called on the two belligerents to stop fighting immediately, but there is little prospect of an early cease-fire, mainly because the other countries concerned have no intention to mediate in the dispute.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union, which have played an important role in the easing of tension in the Mideast, still remain firm not to intervene in the current dispute. The two super powers are too conscious of each other's moves. Such Arabian countries as Saudi Arabia and Jordan on the list of the "doves" have shown sympathy toward the Iraqi cause while the "hawks" including Syria and Libya have declared support for Iran. Meanwhile, Egypt, firmly maintaining its neutral position, has refused to move either way.

There is no love lost between Syria and Iraq over the confrontation on the question of the international Baath Arab Socialist Party. With the emergence of revolutionary Iran, Saudi Arabia moved closer to the Arab hawks in terms of anti-Israeli strategy. The

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downfall of Iran at this time may result in the disengagement of Saudi Arabia from the hawks and isolation of Syria in the Arab camp.

Verging on the Israeli border, Syria cannot soft-pedal its hitherto tough line. Its Golan Heights are still being occupied by Israel. All this accounts for the hurried visit to Moscow of President Assad and the conclusion of the Soviet-Syrian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. In terms of the Arab strategy vis-a-vis Israel, however, the hawks cannot tolerate the possible dropout of Iraq from their line.

The same thing can be said of Jordan and Saudi Arabia which have sided with Iraq in the current flareup. Iran has certainly posed a threat to Saudi Arabia as a revolutionary country, but it does not want the emergence of a powerful Iraq in the Gulf area as a result of the fighting.

U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim was quoted as saying that the fighting between Iraq and Iran may last for a year or two. To our regret, the present situation appears to endorse his prediction.

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MAURITANIA

OULD MOUKNASS UNDER HOUSE ARREST

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 24 Sep 80 p 37

[Article: "How To Save Ould Mouknass"]

[Text] Former Foreign Minister (1968-1978) Hamdi Ould Mouknass is back home in Nouadhibou. He has been placed there in an assigned residence since 11 September, the day he was transferred after over a year of imprisonment without trial at Boumdeid, north of Kiffa (in the South).

All those who interceded in his favor with Colonel Khouna Ould Haidalla now hope that the President will perform another gesture by lifting his assigned residence status. For Hamdi Ould Mouknass's state of health requires constant care, as at age 47 he is seriously ill. The treatment he received in Paris in February, then in June 1979, was then to be repeated in November or December. The CMSN [Military Committee for National Salvation] must have possibly found some new reason to distrust him, if they have refused to allow this trip to France. For Hamdi Ould Mouknass returned punctually to Mauritania after his February and June treatments. And no one has forgotten that in July 1978, after the downfall of Moktar Ould Daddah, he voluntarily left Khartoum (Sudan), where he was participating in the fifteenth OAU Summit as Foreign Minister, to return to his country. Added proof of his loyalty to his country, over and above whatever regime: he returned with two checks totalling \$10 million in aid, one from Iraq, the other from the United Arab Emirates. But perhaps in the eyes of the CMSN Paris represents too much of a place of temptation for an eventual rallying of the opposition. If this be the case, President Haidalla is well aware that there are other countries beside France where Hamdi Ould Mouknass could get the care his state of health requires.

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MAURITANIA

BRIEFS

CATTLE DECIMATED BY DROUGHT--More than 70 percent of the livestock were decimated in the East and Central regions of Mauritania due to the delay in the rainfall, according to an announcement on 9 September by Mr Mohamed Ould Amar, Mauritanian minister of Rural Development. The delay and paucity of rainfall might ruin the season for farming, he said; in July some farming areas got only 40 percent of their normal precipitation. The consequences of an overly short rainy season will be catastrophic for the livestock because the fodder plants will not have completed their vegetative cycle before the season of great heat (October). In 1979, a year when Mauritania was one of the countries of the Sahel most affected by the drought, the country's grain deficit was on the order of 75,000 tons, most of which was made up by the international community (See MTM 25 Aug 80, p 2131). [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Sep 80 p 2291] 2750

REGIONAL BUDGETS APPROVED--The Mauritanian Council of Ministers on 3 September examined and adopted draft decrees on approval of the budgets for FY 1980 of the following regions, budgets which balance in receipts and expenditures according to the figures that follow (in millions of ouguiya): Brakna: 15.9; Trarza: 29.6; Gorgol: 18.2; Tagant: 13.6; Assaba: 15.3; Guidimaka: 9.7. All of these budgets are characterized by a drop in operating expenses, in accordance with the austerity policy and a substantial increase in the percentage of credits allocated for equipment and development. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Sep 80 p 2291] 2750

IRAQI LOAN--A loan of \$45 million was granted to Mauritania by Iraq, according to an announcement from Bagdad on 6 September. In accordance with an Iraqi-Mauritanian agreement concluded last May at Bagdad the Iraqi government allocated a long-term credit of \$45 million earmarked for implementation of various development projects in Mauritania. [Text] [Paris TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Sep 80 p 2291] 2750

FED GRANT FOR DAM--With cofinancing of German aid and other financial backers, the European Development Fund will grant Mauritania a 9,385,000 ECU [European Currency Unit] grant for the Fom Gleita dam within the framework of the management of Gorgol Noir. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 26 Sep 80 p 2353] 9380

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MOROCCO

EFFECTS OF SAHARAN WAR ON ECONOMY

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 8 Oct 80 pp 32-33

[Article by Abdelaziz Dahmani: "It's Not Only the Sahara"]

[Text] There was a skit on Moroccan television last month by the superb singing duo, Bziz and Baz, where the humor was only equal to the insolence. The scene took place in the butcher shop. The first customer, an average Moroccan, offered 20 rials, equal to 1 dirham or some 55 CFA francs, just to sniff a piece of meat, which he could not afford because of the current skyhigh prices. The second customer, a society woman, in turn bought all the choicest pieces on display for her dog.

This scene about daily life and so many others, were unthinkable just 6 months ago. However, it realistically portrays the situation in early autumn 1980. There are more and more democratic freedoms and fear has diminished, but the other side of the coin is that the economic and social life has become increasingly difficult. Some point the finger: it is caused by the war in the Sahara....

Full Force

This is partially true. The "recovery of the provinces in the south" was, roughly speaking, the leaven of democratization, with the need to close ranks and unite all parties behind King Hassan II. Since 1976, this has led little by little to removing pressures, releasing many political prisoners and granting amnesty to all opponents living abroad....

However, the costly Sahara war has also made daily life more difficult, with its quota systems, deprivations and higher prices. The latter affected families with modest incomes full force on 5 September 1980, when sugar, oil, milk, butter and flour increased 30 percent because the Compensation Fund could no longer artificially support the price of all these staples. The war is not the only cause of all the difficulties in Morocco. It is impossible to estimate its actual cost because many military bills--thanks to the solidarity of some countries, especially Saudi Arabia--do not come under the jurisdiction of the bookkeepers.

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In 1979, for the first time, the petroleum bill (purchase of 4.5 million tons) was more (2.437 billion dirhams, approximately 125 billion CFA francs) than the revenues from the sale of phosphates (1.878 billion dirhams), the principal wealth of the country. There is another worry: the sale of citrus fruits, the second largest income earner, in 1979 brought in 859 million dirhams, much less than wheat purchases (973 million). With equipment outlays, the trade deficit exceeded 7 billion dirhams in 1979...in 1980, there was a jump in exports: 5.027 billion dirhams for the first 6 months, compared with 8.5 billion in imports.

Gloominess

With officially more than 20 million inhabitants this year, Morocco's main problem is to halt a certain deterioration in the living conditions of most citizens, without endangering its basic options and its economic liberalism, and without frightening too much a national private sector which provided 45 percent of the investments for the current five-year (1978-1982) plan. However, the gloomy world economy and domestic problems have meant that less than 60 percent of the plan's objectives have thus far been achieved. To stir up the humdrum routine, King Hassan II took charge of some matters under the jurisdiction of the government and parliament. He added economic and social concerns recently to defense and foreign affairs, his private domains.

Royal Manna

He spent several weeks in Casablanca in July and August, trying to bring order to the economic capital which has 2.5 million inhabitants and attracts rural migrants. Hassan II also had to attack the crucial problems of rent and education, while a committee of reflection, headed by Prime Minister Maati Bouabid, examined the economy. Certainly, to soothe social tensions, the king ordered, on 20 August 1980, a one-third reduction in the rents of all wage earners making less than 1,500 dirhams a month and he exempted builders of residential housing from taxes for 15 years.

In education, the monarch reversed some decisions of his education minister, Azzedine Taraki, who favors limiting admissions to the universities. The king held a colloquy at Ifrane from 28 to 31 August 1980 to discuss the problems of national education with the major political groups in the country. It was a success. The beginning of the school year, at the lower and university levels, unfolded calmly; this is important because there are some 3 million students (2.2 million in primary schools, 700,000 in secondary schools and 80,000 in higher education,) not including 85,000 teachers and professors.

Most of these teachers held a so-called political strike in 1979 demanding the release of their colleagues and students in prison and the removal of the ban on the UNEM [National Union of Moroccan Students]. This strike, like those of the post office employees and workers in the health field, enhanced the popularity of the USFP [Socialist Union of Popular Forces] of lawyer Abderrahim Bouabid, who, despite several invitations, never wished to participate in the government coalition.

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He headed the largest of the four committees at the Ifrane colloquy, on the 1980-1981 university opening. It recommended and obtained a larger number of admissions for students (limited until then to 14,310 plus 15,000 by competition,) increased facilities for additional faculty, more scholarships and improved housing conditions.

Poor and Ignorant

Thus far, the palace has made many gestures to the USFP to thaw the political atmosphere. In addition to the measures on education and rents (the USFP only asked that they be frozen); there was the release of political prisoners, except the "pro-Polisario" prisoners; amnesty for a large number of exiles; among them, Abderrahman Yousfi (Fkih Basri's case is an exception) and professional reinstatement of many of the 1979 strikers. Finally, in mid-September, the trial of the assassins of Omar Benjelloun, a major figure in the USFP, was held: two were sentenced to death.

The USFP has practically been cornered into participating in the new government which the whole country has been talking about for several weeks. However, one wonders if the party leaders want to overcome their quarrels of yesteryear. Only the Sahara affair has thus far made them agree. This affair no longer has the importance it did at the time of the Green March. This is all the more so because all danger of a military defeat seems removed, people say in Morocco. Suddenly, the field for maneuver is narrower. The years 1980 and 1981 may be crucial if Morocco wishes to meet the economic and social challenge of the year 2000. At the Ifrane colloquy, Hassan II said that if the country kept on with its present education programs, it would find itself poor and ignorant.

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MOROCCO

KING HASSAN'S REMARKS ON JERUSALEM OCCUPATION, SAHARAN STRUGGLE

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 10 Oct 80 p 2456

[Text] The al Qods (Jerusalem) Committee, the offshoot of the Islamic Conference founded in 1968 in Morocco, usually meets in Fez. For King Hassan, it is a diplomatic tool all the more useful because other circumstances, in particular, the Saharan matter, has soured his relations with some Arab or Moslem governments. Consequently, the Moroccan sovereign was on hand and gave an important speech on 18 September 1980, at the opening of the extraordinary conference of Islamic countries, brought together by this committee to study measures to oppose the Israeli encroachment on Jerusalem.

Speaking "in the name of the Moslem community," King Hassan told the Palestinians: "You are not the only ones who lost al Qods, and we are going to win it back together because al Qods is the sacred cause of every Moslem man and woman." He added the word "dijihad" had to be given its present meaning, that of the elaboration of a plan of effective strategic, military, psychological and political action, and that the support to be given to the cause by all Moslem countries and the means to oppose the enemy had to be minutely defined. The latter had fallen into the same trap as Nazism: he despised religious belief and human dignity: "If we can take advantage of his errors, we can overcome his despotism and vanity."

The Moroccan sovereign knew the term "dijihad" was often translated in the West, purely and simply, by "holy war," while its full meaning was "effort in the path of God." Thus, his remarks on this subject were also addressed to Western opinion.

This battle to be waged, he specified, was not a modern version of religious wars "but we must form religious fronts, leagues of human rights, associations, to stand up to the efforts to plunder the people." Nevertheless, the idea of war was not rejected: "When I talk of "dijihad," it means everything...."

The king's recommendations were reflected apparently in point 23 of the final recommendations of the conference: "The Islamic nations announce their complete support of the "dijihad," with the vast human implications involved, knowing that it means resistance or struggle against the Zionist enemy in all areas--military, political, economic, cultural and in the media." The plan of action, to be drawn up for this end will have to be, as King Hassan stated initially,

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submitted to the Islamic Summit which will be held in Saudi Arabia at the beginning of the XVth century (year 1401) of the Hegira, which will "definitively close Moslem ranks."

Returning to the subject of Jerusalem during a press conference on 21 September 1980 at the Ifrane palace, King Hassan stated Jerusalem must first return to its pre-Six Day War status and then a definitive solution could be contemplated; this remark was probably to assuage the sensitivities of King Hussein of Jordan.

Continuing Diplomatic Effort for "Moroccan Sahara"

During the same press conference, the sovereign again optimistically mentioned the recommendations approved 11 September 1980 at Freetown by the OAU Committee of Wise Men*, although his minister of foreign affairs, Mr Boucetta, stated the document contained nothing new and stigmatized "Africa's flight from its responsibilities." King Hassan felt that "Freetown II was better for Morocco than Freetown I." However, a referendum in Western Sahara, under the supervision of the OAU and the United Nations, in no way meets with Morocco's favor; it feels that the people have already clearly and adequately expressed their choice in its favor.

By insisting that the Freetown recommendations be submitted to a conference at the OAU Summit which he will attend, King Hassan perhaps is revealing part of his plan. Morocco will certainly insist that the decision be made by a two-thirds majority, and the King hopes, careful not to commit himself too much, that some African heads of state will support this plan; in that case, it is likely the Freetown text will not be approved. All the diplomatic work patiently done in the OAU framework will be thus made useless.

Meanwhile, the Moroccan Government is showing the importance it attaches to the fact that pro-Moroccan Saharan organizations received a hearing in Freetown like the Polisario. The best-known organization is AOSARIO [Association of Natives of Saguiet al Hamra and Rio de Oro.] There were nine other small groups at Freetown and their variety, in the face of the single party of the Polisario, should bear witness to the democratic freedoms in Morocco: MOREHOB [Revolutionary Movement of the Blue Men]; FLU [Front for Liberation and Unity] and PUNS [Party of Saharan National Unity]....

According to certain observers, several participants at the Freetown conference noted with interest that the president of the Algerian Republic, Mr Chadli Bendjedid, who attended the first day's meeting, spoke in a subtle, moderate manner. He indicated Algeria's willingness "to make all possible efforts to eliminate the true causes of tension and conflict," recalled his country "had no territorial or economic claims," and stressed his position on the self-determination of the Saharan people and his wish to aid the latter to exercise this right deriving from principles which could not be negotiated "but this does not mean we oppose the brother Moroccan people, toward whom

*See MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS, issue 1819, 19 September 1980, p 2285

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we feel all sentiments of friendship and esteem."

Rumors about possible secret negotiations were rife, but there is nothing to confirm them. On the contrary, it has been noted that the Algerian media continues to follow a hard line; it publicized, among other things, the Polisario's capture of military equipment of South African origin; in particular, tanks used by the Moroccan forces.

Continued Fighting in the South

Fighting continues in the territory of the former Spanish Sahara and in "uncontested" southern Morocco. The Moroccan media states that the Polisario will always, during African diplomatic meetings, step up operations to increase its credibility. Each belligerent has, moreover, in the current stage of hostilities, reasons for claiming the advantage.

The Saharans continue to harass Moroccan garrisons often in the former Spanish territory; but, no doubt because of the Moroccan air force activity, the Polisario no longer commits large numbers of troops in this zone; it has, however, carried out large operations, for example, against Smara (23 and 24 August 1980) and especially against Laayoun, by sea (18 September 1980.) On the other hand, in southern Morocco, the troops committed are sizable on both sides; the Moroccan forces claim to have the initiative with their combination of large garrisons and mobile units [DIR - Rapid Intervention Units] which attract the Saharans to sufficiently fortified places which can be held against surprise attacks and thus exposes them to harsh counterattack.

From now on, it will be a war of attrition which the Saharans can only feed by recruiting in neighboring countries, like Mauritania which provides one-third of their troops and with whom the Polisario remains on good terms by regularly releasing some of its Mauritanian prisoners. Consequently, relations between Morocco and Mauritania are deteriorating.

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WESTERN SAHARA

ALGERIA MITIGATES POLISARIO INTRANSIGENCE

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 1 Oct 80 p 33

[Text] A battle took place between the POLISARIO and the Moroccan army on 18 September east of Tarafaya in uncontested Morocco. The guerillas ambushed several units of the Larak group (JA No 1029). The result: a serious "loss" on both sides. Each of the two antagonists speaks of a clear victory with an impressive list of dead and materiel destroyed or recovered from the adversary.

This battle, started "from position" by the POLISARIO, occurred at a point named after Freetown II (the meeting of the OAU wisemen, 9-12 September). The Front is thus avoiding the demobilization of its troops, which suffered several reversals lately. And it is showing its friends that it is not at an impasse.

For the Freetown meeting led to an inextricable situation. The committee of the wisemen called for the organization of a referendum among the Saharan population without requiring that the Moroccans leave the Sahara region, either administratively or militarily. This is something new. The omission passed for a gesture towards Rabat, a gesture which would not have been possible if Algeria had not tempered the intransigence...of the POLISARIO.

In his 10 September hearing behind closed doors Ibrahim Hakim, the SDAR [Saharan Democratic Arab Republic] minister of foreign affairs first refused any consultation with the populations, affirming that "self-determination has already been achieved by the War of Liberation." That very evening President Chadli Benjedid convoked the POLISARIO delegation at his villa. The next day, still behind closed doors and again through Ibrahim Hakim, the POLISARIO took a step backwards.

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WESTERN SAHARA

BRIEFS

ALGERIAN ROLE IN WAR--Precisely because of the atmosphere of trust reestablished between the two governments on the occasion of Jean Francois-Poncet's visit to Algiers (18-20 September) and the good relations which Paris has maintained with Rabat, Algeria would like to see France play "a role" in finding a solution in the Sahara. President Chadli Benjedid evoked this possibility when receiving the French head of diplomacy. It seems, however, that Paris is not inclined to depart from its "neutrality," but will encourage the parties to the conflict to find a solution themselves. Moreover, Algerians and Moroccans met again secretly in early September. But Algeria deplores the Moroccan intransigence, itself being unable to drop the POLISARIO too roughly. The latter would then have Libya for its sole support and "manipulator." [Text] [Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 1 Oct 80 p 47] 9380

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